Governors Report October 2021

Exams

Government/Ofqual have finally decided that real national exams will take place this year. This should have been decided months ago and all schools now find themselves in the difficult position of trying to reorganise. Our English Department, for instance, spent some time last year teaching our current year 11s the poetry component of the GCSE exams. It is now the case that this component has been cut.

Staff are doing an extraordinary job of trying to galvanise the children but this isn't easy, especially after a period of nearly 2 years where attendance and normal expectations of children across the country, have been abandoned. This might be for understandable reasons, but people cannot underestimate the power of culture and the effect that the country's position on this has had on schools with deprived intakes.

We are doing all that we can to prepare the children for GCSE and A level but there is no question that this is tough.

Mock exams will be taking place both for year 11 and year 13 in December/January.

Attendance

As governors know, our attendance was excellent for the first 7.5 years of our existence. Then Covid happened and it has taken a nosedive. Our attendance before Covid was at 97.4% and it is now at 94.7%. What is particularly worrying is that Covid has made poor attendance not only acceptable but to be expected. It is very hard to insist on excellent attendance when the mood of the nation is one where people believe they should stay at home and lives are in danger if they go to school.

Governors should be aware that I think it will be difficult to return to the attendance figures that we once had. Staff are working hard on this but changing culture is hard, especially in the current climate.

Having said that, we hope that once the winter is over, we will be able to make a real difference on attendance.

Visitors

We have opened the school back up to guests and we have visitors in daily. This is lovely to see. Children love welcoming our guests and it gives them the opportunity to practise their soft skills. They can ask guests

about their careers and have a real conversation with someone they don’t know over lunch, something we all take for granted.

Building

The building works approved by governors went ahead over the summer and governors must visit the 3rd floor to see our wonderful classrooms and how the Maths department have benefitted!

Staffing

All of our new staff who have joined this September are doing well. All seem to have found their feet and are getting acclimatised to the Michaela way. Established staff are also doing well. As usual, staff have been in 100% of the time. We have very few absences and staff are as committed as ever.